



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: June 26, 2007

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department
Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Adoption of Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Adopting the Santa Barbara Countywide Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

DISCUSSION:

State grant programs increasingly require an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) as a prerequisite for obtaining funding for water-related projects. The State uses the plans to promote State water policies and optimize the allocation of grant funding to the various regions of California. In August 2006, the Council authorized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by which the City and 28 other "Cooperating Partners" in Santa Barbara County would develop an IRWMP for the Santa Barbara County region. The Cooperating Partners include virtually all of the government agencies, water districts, and sanitation districts in Santa Barbara County.

Since August 2006, work on the plan has proceeded, with assistance from the consulting firm of CH2MHill at a cost of approximately \$300,000. The City has contributed approximately \$30,000 toward this effort. The process included regular meetings of the Cooperating Partners and four pairs of stakeholder and public outreach meetings held in North and South County locations. The IRWMP has now been completed and is being recommended for adoption by the Cooperating Partners.

REVIEWED BY: _____Finance _____Attorney

Agenda Item No. _____

Santa Barbara Countywide IRWMP

The Santa Barbara Countywide IRWMP (SBCIRWMP) describes the region's water management setting, history, challenges, goals, objectives, and strategies. While developing the document, the Cooperating Partners realized that much progress has been made in regional water planning, but identified a number of remaining concerns. In response to these concerns, particular attention has been given to regional objectives and how they relate to State priorities and IRWMP requirements. Following is a summary of the resulting regional priorities. The priorities reflect the State's IRWMP guidelines, as well as additional locally identified objectives.

- Reduce the potential for flooding
- Increase water supply reliability
- Strategically restore and replace wastewater infrastructure
- Ensure adequacy of water and wastewater facilities in disadvantaged communities
- Improve surface and ocean water quality and reduce beach closures
- Define groundwater contamination sources and prevention strategies
- Protect, restore, and enhance ecological processes in aquatic areas
- Ensure adequacy of water supplies during emergencies
- Develop programs and policies to increase groundwater recharge or decrease groundwater use
- Encourage interagency cooperation in developing groundwater banking programs

The Environmental Analyst has determined that adoption of the SBCIRWMP is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act. The recommendation to adopt the SBCIRWMP was scheduled for review by the Creeks Advisory Committee on June 20, 2007. While a lack of quorum prevented review by the Water Commission as scheduled for June 11, 2007, the Commission was briefed previously on the development of the SBCIRWMP.

Next Steps

Upcoming grant opportunities related to IRWMP include:

- Proposition 50: Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002
- Proposition 1E: Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006
- Proposition 84: Safe Drinking, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006

Proposition 50: The Cooperating Partners are developing an application under Round 2 of Proposition 50, with funding of up to \$64.5 million available for Southern California. City staff proposed the Lower Mission Creek Flood Control and Rehabilitation Project during a ranking exercise conducted by the Cooperating Partners, in which each

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member had the opportunity to propose a project for ranking by the group. Unfortunately, the project received a low ranking and is not currently expected to be included within the \$25 million proposal package. Highly ranked projects included four infrastructure projects in Disadvantaged Communities, several wastewater treatment projects in North County communities where wastewater is an integral part of the water supply through groundwater recharge, and water supply reliability projects in the South County. One such project proposed by the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board would augment the South Coast Conduit, with a direct City benefit of about \$1.4 million. Staff believes the low ranking for the City's Mission Creek project reflected a generally higher regard among the partners for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, compared to flood control/creek rehabilitation. The ranking was probably also reinforced by State input that a project like the Mission Creek project would be a good match for both Proposition 1E and Proposition 84 funding.

Propositions 1E & 84: As noted, Proposition 1E is specifically aimed at flood control and seems a good match for the Mission Creek project, so staff will continue to pursue funding through Proposition 1E. Proposition 84 includes \$52 million for Integrated Regional Water Management in the Central Coast funding area, consisting generally of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and Santa Cruz Counties, as well as some separate funding for flood control. Under both propositions, as with Proposition 50, consistency with an adopted IRWMP is expected to be necessary to qualify for funding.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The Santa Barbara Countywide IRWMP will allow the City to access a variety of grant opportunities in the future as currently approved bond measures are implemented and future acts are approved. We can expect this to include funding for water conservation efforts, creek restoration, and other efforts that support the City's sustainability efforts. Being part of an adopted IRWMP improves the likelihood of qualifying for such funding.

The final Santa Barbara Countywide IRWMP and appendices are available for review at the City Clerk's Office and the Office of the Mayor and Councilmembers.

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SUBMITTED BY: Anthony J. Nisich, Public Works Director
Nancy Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office